

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are pending in the present application. In the Office Action dated November 10, 2005, claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,468,096 to Franz ("Franz"). Claims 1-6 and 9-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,451,758 to McClain ("McClain"). Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,175,331 to Klein ("Klein"). Claims 1, 4, and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,282,900 to McDonell et al. ("McDonell"). Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McClain. The specification was also objected to as failing to provide a proper antecedent basis for the subject matter in dependent claims 6 and 7.

The embodiments disclosed in the present application will now be discussed in comparison to the cited references. Of course, the discussion of the disclosed embodiments, and the discussion of the differences between the disclosed embodiments and the cited references, does not define the scope or interpretation of any of the claims. Instead, such discussed differences merely help the Examiner appreciate important claim distinctions discussed thereafter.

According to one embodiment of the invention, a scrubbing soap bar includes a scrubbing element having a filamentous network with internal void regions that is substantially surrounded by a soap material. The void regions of the scrubbing element may be at least partially filled by the soap material. The scrubbing element may be formed from essentially the filamentous network that advantageously permits the scrubbing soap bar to cleanse objects having recesses and crevices. Thus, the scrubbing element does not need additional abrasive particles disposed thereon to effectively function as an abrasive medium.

The Examiner has cited Franz and McClain. Figure 2 of Franz shows a scouring pad having a washing compound interposed between superposed layers of non-woven fibrous material. McClain also similarly discloses superposed fibrous layers 10 and 11 with a detergent cake 12 therebetween. Thus, Franz and McClain do not disclose or fairly suggest a non-woven fibrous material substantially surrounded by a washing compound. Neither Franz nor McClain disclose that the washing compound substantially surrounds a non-woven fibrous material.

Instead, Franz and McClain teach away from a soap material or washing compound substantially surrounding a non-woven fibrous material because they teach that the non-woven fibrous material substantially surrounds the washing compound.

The Examiner has also cited McDonell. McDonell discloses a surface treating article that is formed from a nonwoven fibrous web coated with a binder formulation containing abrasive particles. (McDonell, col. 6, lines 13-16). Surfactants may be added to the binder formulation. The abrasive particles are bonded to the fibers of the nonwoven fibrous web. (McDonell, col. 6, lines 30-35). Therefore, to the extent that the fibrous web is a scrubbing element, it has abrasive particles disposed thereon that function as the scrubbing element. McDonell teaches away from a scrubbing element that consists essentially of the fibrous web because McDonell stresses that tailoring the abrasive particle size range is critical to their invention. (McDonell, col. 7, lines 5-7).

Finally, the Examiner has cited Klein. Klein discloses a cleaning pad that may be formed from a single ply of batt 13 containing randomly-arranged fibers 6. (Klein, col. 7, lines 33-35; Figures 4 and 5). The batt 13 has sprayed over one or both side surfaces 16 and 20, heat-sealable adhesive 9 in an amount sufficient to allow the peripheral edges 12 to be heat sealed. (Klein, col. 7, lines 36-39). In addition to the adhesive 9, abrasive containing adhesive 10 is also applied to the batt 13. (Klein, col. 7, lines 39-41). Klein points out that it is preferable to spray the abrasive containing adhesive 10 over the heat-sealable adhesive 9 on the batt 13 to achieve better scouring action. (Klein, col. 7, lines 43-51). The batt 13 having heat sealed peripheral edges 12 and the abrasive containing adhesive 10 is then dipped into a solution or paste of washing composition and thereafter drying the cleaning pad so that the dried washing composition is incorporated into the interstices of the batt 13. (Klein, col. 4, lines 52-58).

The scrubbing element of the cleaning pad disclosed in Klein includes not only the batt 13, but the abrasive particles of the abrasive containing adhesive 10 disposed on the batt 13. Klein also teaches away from a scrubbing element that consists essentially of the batt 13 because it emphasizes the importance of using the abrasive particles to improve scouring. (Klein, col. 7, lines 43-51).

Turning now to the claims, the patentably distinct differences between the cited references and the claim language will be specifically pointed out. Amended claim 1 recites “[a]

scrubbing soap bar, comprising: a soap material; and a scrubbing element substantially surrounded by the soap material, the scrubbing element consisting essentially of a filamentous network with internal void regions, the void regions of the scrubbing element being at least partially filled with the soap material.”

None of the cited references discloses or fairly suggests a scrubbing element substantially surrounded by a soap material and the scrubbing element consisting essentially of a filamentous network with internal void regions. Franz, McClain, and McDonell do not disclose or fairly suggest the limitations of “a scrubbing element substantially surrounded by a soap material.” In particular, Franz and McClain teach away from such limitations because they teach the scrubbing element substantially surrounds soap material. Klein and McDonell do not disclose or fairly suggest the limitations of “the scrubbing element consisting essentially of a filamentous network with internal void regions.” Klein teaches that the scrubbing element includes not only the fibrous batt, but also abrasive particles that were applied to the batt. McDonell also teaches a scrubbing element that includes not only a nonwoven fibrous web, but includes abrasive particles on the fibers. Therefore, Klein and McDonell do not disclose or fairly suggest the limitations of “the scrubbing element consisting essentially of a filamentous network with internal void regions” because the fibrous structures disclosed in Klein and McDonell also have abrasive particles disposed thereon.

Therefore, amended claim 1 is patentable over the cited references for at least these reasons. Claims depending from claim 1 are also allowable due to depending from an allowable base claim and further in view of the additional limitations recited in the dependent claims.

Claim 9 has been amended to correct a typographical error and not for reasons related to patentability.

The specification has been amended to address the Examiner’s objection to the claim terms “ferrous material” and “non-ferrous material.” The paragraph beginning on page 4, line 14, now recites that “[s]uch fibrous metallic materials may be formed of ferrous and non-ferrous materials.” Support for this amendment is found in dependent claims 6 and 7 as originally filed.

All of the claims remaining in the application (claims 1-10) are now clearly allowable. Favorable consideration and a timely Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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